



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

**MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH**

AND

CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR

OF THE

**BOROUGH OF TAUNTON
FOR THE YEAR 1949**

Public Health Department,
St. Paul's House,
TAUNTON.
15th August, 1950.

The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses.

THE BOROUGH OF TAUNTON.

Mr. Mayor, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit an abridged annual report for the year 1949, which is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Health in their circular of February, 1950. This is my thirty-first and last report. During this period there have been many developments, particularly in the Maternity and Child Welfare Services, such as extension of the Infant Welfare Centres, the commencement of the Ante-natal Clinic and the opening and subsequent extension of the Maternity Home.

An extensive programme of slum clearance began in 1930 and continued up to the outbreak of war in 1939. In this programme over 1,000 houses were represented as unfit. Many of these were in narrow courts off the main streets—were without backlet and lacking in ordinary sanitary facilities such as an internal water supply, separate W.C. and ventilated food store.

As regards infectious diseases the most remarkable fact is the practical elimination of Diphtheria—as a result of the immunisation scheme started in 1938. For children, Whooping Cough remains as the most dangerous disease, closely followed by Measles, while Scarlet Fever appears to have become a much milder disease.

There have been two outbreaks of Enteric Fever—the first in 1919 was traced to an infected milk supply from outside the Borough—but the cause of the second in 1941 was obscure.

I have to express my appreciation of the interest the Chairman—Alderman A. J. West, J.P., has taken in the work of this Department and to the staff for their loyal co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ALLEN,

Medical Officer of Health.

BOROUGH OF TAUNTON.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1949.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area in Acres	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,434
Population estimated by Registrar General, civilian	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33,340
						Total	...	33,720
Number of inhabited houses at the end of 1949 according to the Rate Books	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8,969
Rateable value at the end of 1949	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£251,046
Estimated product of a penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£974

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births, live legitimate	—	Male 286	Female 286	...	Total	572
Births, live, illegitimate	—	Male 19	Female 21	...	Total	40
Births, still legitimate	—	Male 2	Female 6	...	Total	8
Births, still illegitimate	—	Male 1	Female 0	...	Total	1
Birth rate	total	...	...	...	...	18.6
	live	...	...	...	...	18.3
	still	...	...	...	...	0.2
	illegitimate	...	...	...	...	1.2
Deaths, Male 212, Female 205	...	...	...	...	Total	417
Death rate, Crude	...	...	...	...	...	12.5
Death rate, Corrected (by factor 0.94)=	...	...	...	...	...	11.7
Deaths of infants under one year of age, Male 14, Female 7,	...	...	...	...	Total	21
Infant Mortality Rate	...	...	...	...	...	34.3
Deaths from Diarrhoea under two years of age	...	...	...	...	...	1
Rate per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	...	1.06
There were no deaths from Measles, Whooping Cough, Diphtheria, Poliomyelitis, or Polio-encephalitis.						

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948, SECTION 47.

This deals with the removal to suitable premises of persons in need of care and attention and Section 48 of the Taunton Corporation Act, 1937 which contained somewhat similar powers is cancelled.

Ten cases were investigated during the year—of these seven did not appear to come within the terms of the Act and no action was possible under it, while one was found to be of unsound mind and dealt with as such by the appropriate authority, another was removed to a hospital for nervous disease by informal action.

It was necessary to take formal action in one case, an aged woman, living alone, with an ulcer on the leg, badly in need of treatment and in very insanitary surroundings. An application was made to the Justices and an Order obtained for her removal to Hospital, and her stay there for a period of three months. She was moved to Hospital and while there was found to be of unsound mind and removed to a mental hospital.

These cases need very careful investigation and tactful handling and every effort is made to avoid the need for formal action, while the scarcity of accommodation suitable for this type of case is an added difficulty.

HEALTH SERVICES.

Your powers and duties as a Maternity and Child Welfare Authority which you had exercised since 1908, when you adopted the Notification of Births Act 1907 and appointed a Health Visitor, were transferred on the 5th July, 1948, to the Somerset County Council. The Maternity Home was then taken over by the Regional Hospital Board, and the Health Visitors, Infant Welfare Centres, Ante-natal Clinics, Day Nursery and the duty of Infant Life Protection were transferred to the Somerset County Council, under N.H.S. Act.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply.

This comes from an Upland source on the Blackdown Hills where it is collected in three reservoirs, then passed through rapid sand filters and chlorinated, and held in covered reservoirs at Fulwood prior to distribution. It has been excellent in quality. Samples for bacteriological examination were taken at least once each week from a main tap in different parts of the town. These are submitted to the Bacteriologist of the Ministry of Health in County Hall. In 53 samples from this source, 51 shewed no probable coliform bac. per 100 m.l. Twenty seven samples of the raw water and the water immediately after treatment were taken at fortnightly intervals. The quality of the raw varies with the rainfall and shewed a count of between 90 and 180 probable coliform bacilli per 100 m.l. while of those taken immediately after treatment 96 per cent. shewed no probable coliform bac. per 100 m.l. As regards quantity it was found necessary owing to the dry winter and hot summer to curtail the supply between the 9th August and 28th October during which period it was cut off from 5 p.m. to 6 a.m. During this curtailment 5 samples were taken from main taps in areas where the presence of ball hydrants might admit some local contamination—of these 60 per cent. shewed no probable coliform bacilli per 100 m.l. An additional supply for part of the western area was obtained from a bore hole in Musgrove Park Hospital from the 11th October until 2nd December, this was a hard water—and six samples shewed no probable coliform bacilli per 100 m.l.

<i>Chemical Analysis (Blagdon source).</i>						<i>All in parts per million.</i>	
Reaction	p. H.	...	...	...	...		7.4
Hardness, permanent	35°	↓	...	...	...	Total	70°
Hardness, temporary	35°	↓	...	...	...
Nitrogen as saline and free ammonia							0.01
Nitrogen as albuminoid ammonia							0.05
Nitrogen as nitrates							1.2
Nitrogen as nitrites							nil
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate, 4 hours at 80° F.							0.6
Free C.O.2.							2.2
Sediment							nil

About 57 per cent. of the water consumed was taken from the Otterhead source where there is the possibility of pollution from three farms. Arrangements are being made to chlorinate this supply before it is pumped into Priors Park dam.

With the exception of 51 houses—all are supplied direct from public mains. Of these not so supplied 46 with a population of 161 are in confirmed Clearance Orders, 4 are supplied from wells and 1 from a spring.

THE PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The table following shows the kind and number of cases notified and the final numbers corrected by information received from the Isolation Hospital or other sources.

<i>Diseases</i>	<i>Originally notified</i>	<i>Removed to I.H.</i>	<i>Corrected numbers</i>	<i>Deaths</i>
Scarlet Fever	24	16	21	—
Whooping Cough	44	1	44	—
Ac. Poliomyelitis	8	6	7	—
Ac. Polio-encephalitis	1	—	—	—
Measles	273	5	273	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—
Ac. Pneumonia	2	—	2	—
Dysentery	—	—	—	—
Smallpox	—	—	—	—
Ac. encephalitis lethargica	—	—	—	—
Enteric or typhoid fever	—	—	—	—
Para typhoid fever	1	1	—	—
Erysipelas	7	2	7	—
Cerebro spinal fever	—	—	—	—
Food poisoning	—	—	1	—
Puerperal pyrexia	5	2	5	—
Ophthalmia neonatorum	1	1	1	—
Pemphigus neonatorum	1	1	1	—

It will be seen that apart from an outbreak of Measles which occurred in the first quarter of the year that there was little infectious disease. There was no case of Diphtheria.

Food Poisoning.

One case notified as Paratyphoid fever and removed to the isolation Hospital proved on investigation there to be due to infection with *Salmonella typhi murium* and as such to be recorded as a case of food poisoning. Investigation of the possible sources of infection pointed to a domestic source.

Small Pox.

One contact of a severe type of this disease came here and was kept under daily observation for the requisite period without any development.

Scabies.

An out patient clinic open on Tuesday and Friday afternoons at Musgrove Park Hospital was closed on the 5th August owing to lack of cases.

Between 1st January and 5th August cases treated were:—

			<i>From the Borough</i>	<i>Elsewhere</i>
Cases	...	...	23	15
Attendances	...	...	65	38

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR
For the Year 1949

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses.

Mr. Mayor, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting my annual report for the twelve months ending December 31st, 1949.

SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS.

Housing and General Sanitary Work.

Houses inspected under the Public Health and Housing Acts	...	122
Re-inspections	... ..	370
Infectious disease, in connection with	... ..	186
Factories	... ..	82
Drainage, in connection with	... ..	215
Rodent control (excluding visits by Rodent Operator)	... ..	76
Public conveniences	... ..	10
Houses let in lodgings	... ..	11
Moveable dwellings	... ..	65
Stables, piggeries	... ..	22
Offensive trades	... ..	26
Smoke observations	... ..	26
Verminous premises	... ..	28
Common Lodging Houses	... ..	5
Refuse disposal, in connection with	... ..	14
Shops	... ..	13
Cinemas and places of entertainment	... ..	9
Schools	... ..	13
Interviews	... ..	140
Miscellaneous sanitary visits	... ..	146

Housing Repairs. It has not been possible to undertake any reconditioning of house property under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1936. The present level of building repair costs make it impossible to execute a general specification of works at a reasonable cost having regard to the value of house property based on existing pre-war fixed rentals. Therefore only the more serious defects can be remedied, and these are dealt with under Section 92 of the Public Health Act, 1936. In this connection repairs were effected at 51 houses.

Defence (General) Regulations, 1939. Thirty four houses which have been the subject of Clearance or Demolition Orders under the Housing Act, 1936 are occupied by powers conferred by these Regulations. Occupation of condemned houses after having been

closed is only permitted by licence granted by the Local Authority. The licences run for 6 months and are renewable if the houses are maintained in a reasonable state of repair. During the year one house that had been subject to licence was closed as being unfit for further occupation.

Public Health Act, 1936—Section 24. During the year 12 sewers on private property were cleansed by the Corporation. One such sewer was repaired and amended by the Corporation at the expense of the owners. Sewers dealt with under this Section are those that were maintainable by the owners under Previous public Health Acts.

A case for the recovery of costs incurred by the Corporation in repairing one of these sewers in 1948 came before the County Court Judge in June of the year under review. The defendant disputed liability for the repairs carried out, but the Judge found in favour of the Corporation.

Rodent Control. The systematic treatment of premises for the destruction of rodents was continued under a scheme submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. This scheme provided for the free treatment of private dwellinghouses, but the recovery of full cost from the occupiers in the case of business premises, the Ministry contributing 50% of the net cost of the service. One Rodent Operator is engaged and the following work was carried out by him during the year.

Treatments at private dwellings	...	327
Treatments at Business Premises	...	32
Visits on investigation work	... ..	1,609

Disinfection. Disinfection of premises and bedding after the removal of patients suffering from Tuberculosis, or after death, was carried out at 26 houses.

Vermin and Insect Pests. During the year treatment was carried out at 12 houses with satisfactory results for the eradication of various species of insect.

Offensive Trades. There are seven offensive trades established withing the Borough comprising a tannery, two hide and skin depots, and 4 Rag and Bone Merchants. During the year a serious nuisance was occasioned by the discharge of effluent from the tannery into the Stockwell Stream. Representations were made to the management of the firm, and ultimately the effluent drains were connected to the public sewer. The other trades were conducted without nuisance.

Movable Dwellings. There were three moveable dwellings within the Borough licensed for occupation, and three licensed sites. These have been satisfactorily used during the year.

FOOD INSPECTION.

Visits in connection with the inspection and supervision of food.

Slaughterhouses	701
Foodshops	258
Food preparing premises... ..	24
Dairies and Cowsheds	119
Bakehouses	41
Ice Cream premises	55
Restaurants	34
Visits in connection with the sampling of water, milk and ice cream	149

Milk Supply. During the year important changes took place with regard to the milk supply. The following regulations came into effect on October 1st, 1949:—

The Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949.

The Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulations, 1949.

The Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulations, 1949.

By these regulations all dairy farms came under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Pasteurising and Sterilising processes became controlled by the Food and Drugs Authority (The Somerset County Council), and all dealers in milk are controlled by the Local Authority, who have the responsibility of registering milk distributors and their premises, and the licensing of persons dealing in milk bearing the special designations Accredited, Tuberculin Tested, Pasteurised and Sterilised. Provision is made in the Regulations for the sampling of designated milks with a view to standards being maintained. Work in this connection had not commenced by the end of the year.

Pasteurised Milk. One hundred and eleven samples of pasteurised milk were taken from the three pasteurising plants operating within the Borough up to the time when the control of such premises passed to the Food and Drugs Authority (October 1st, 1949). The reports on these samples showed that all the samples were efficiently pasteurised, but 2 samples failed in the Methylene Blue Test, which indicates unsatisfactory cleansing to some part of the plant or equipment.

Ice Cream. The registrations for premises used for the manufacture, storage or sale of ice cream are as follows:—

Manufacture and sale	10
Storage	1
Storage and sale	46

During the year 6 samples of ice cream were procured from manufacturers and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory. Five of the samples fell into Grade 2 and 1 into Grade 4. Grade 2 is regarded as being satisfactory. Grade 4 is unsatisfactory.

Food Premises. Byelaws to be made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 are in course of preparation. When these are confirmed it will be possible to improve the standard of hygiene with respect to the handling, wrapping etc. of food, and to the sale of food in the open air.

During the year 258 visits were made to food shops and premises for the examination of foodstuffs. This resulted in the condemnation of the following commodities:—

CANNED FOOD.

Fruit	268 tins
Condensed milk	4,909 "
Fish	82 "
Peas and beans	423 "
Beetroot	83 "
Corned beef	191 "
Carrots	38 "
Jam	27 "
Mixed vegetables	50 "
Soup	97 "
Tomato Puree	413 "
Spaghetti	16 "
Tomatoes	66 "
Luncheon meat	139 "

OTHER FOODS.

Wet fish	5 stones
Potatoes	5 cwts.
Pickles and Sauces	67 bottles
Fish Paste	13 jars
Cereals	642 pkts.
Custard	30 "
Semolina	480 "
Coffee	7 bottles
Salad Cream	540 "
Tea	35 lbs.
Margarine	48 "
Figs	36 "
Synthetic Cream	3 galls.
Meat Pies	57 lbs.
Walnuts	2,200 "
Bacon	21 "
Frozen Fish Fillets	199 "
Game and Poultry	401 "
Herrings	6 stones
Sugar	286 lbs.
Soysem	63 "
Prawns	28 "
Hares	3 "
Macaroni	47 lbs.
Flour	18 "
Cheese	18 lbs. and 38 boxes
Sweetphat	6½ cwts.
Sausages	7 lbs.
Beans	140 "
Dates	29 boxes

Meat Inspection. There are two slaughterhouses in use within the Borough, a Government Slaughterhouse and a bacon factory. The former supplies meat to Taunton Borough, Taunton Rural, Wellington Urban, Wellington Rural and Langport Rural Districts. In addition carcasses are exported to London and other centres.

The following animals were slaughtered during the year:—

Beasts	...	...	...	...	...	1,763
Cows	...	...	...	...	...	880
Sheep and Lambs	...	...	...	...	...	12,663
Calves	...	...	...	...	...	1,974
Pigs	...	...	...	...	...	23,537

The inspection of the above carcasses revealed the disease as set out in the following table:—

	Cattle (excl. cows)	Cows	Calves	Sheep Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	1,763	880	1,974	12,663	23,537
Number inspected	1,763	880	710	4,615	23,537
Whole carcasses condemned from diseases other than T.B.	39		3	41	23
Carcasses from which some part or organ was condemned	1,097		38	1,147	584
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than T.B.	42.9%		5.7%	25.7%	2.4%
Tuberculosis only.					
Whole carcasses condemned	68		2	—	47
Carcasses from which some part or organ was condemned	549		1	—	2,638
Percentage of number inspected affected with T.B.	23.3%		.42%	—	11.2%

In addition the following meat was condemned on butchers' premises on account of bone taint:—

Imported						
Mutton	...	...	...	...	...	188 lbs.
Home Killed						
Mutton	...	...	...	...	...	106 lbs.
Beef...	...	...	...	...	...	1,112 „

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

1.—INSPECTIONS for purposes as to provisions as to health.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	18	32	3	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	104	82	7	—
(3) Other premises in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises).	4	9	—	—
TOTAL ...	126	123	10	

2.—Cases in which DEFECTS were found.

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness	3	3	—	1	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors... ..	1	1	—	—	—
Sanitary conveniences					
(a) Insufficient	2	1	—	3	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	2	—	—	2	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to out-work)	2	2	—	1	—
TOTAL ...	10	7	—	7	—

OUTWORK

(Sections 110 and 111)

Nature of Work	Section 110				Section 111	
	No. of out-workers in August list	No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
Making of wearing apparel ...	548	—	—	—	—	—

I am

Your obedient servant,

P. J. GOUGH,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

Printed by
Hammett & Co. (Taunton) Ltd.
53 North Street
Taunton